

SCHOOL PLAYGROUND AND PLAY: A STUDY IN BHAYANDER

Amit Suvarna Siddharth Jadhav**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology
IDOL, University of Mumbai*

Vishnavi Jayshree Rajesh Shinde*

Research Scholar

ABSTRACT

The growing health concern post-covid19 emphasis on the question of play and playgrounds necessity. Previous researches have observed how involving play during school hours not only increases attendance rate but also help increase interest level of students after recess breaks (play break). Primarily data gathered by random sampling, observation with photographing, participant observation and interviewing parents, students and teachers. The paper helps understand current education system and plights light on health of kids in consideration of growth in Schooling environment.

Keywords

School, Playground, Education, Health, Children, Semi-Urban Schooling

INTRODUCTION

Play is a vital aspect while growing, it helps in a child's intellectual, emotional, physical, as well as social development. It can be said that all learning is accelerated, facilitated, and fueled by the pleasure of play.

A playground is an open space for students within the school boundaries under the observation of teachers, which can be utilized during recess and PD periods. Playgrounds provide crucial and fundamental opportunities for children to play and follow their instincts of social bonding through activities such as team games.

But traditional school focuses on academic improvement mainly in math, science, and language of students to benefit in higher education. There is considerable ignorance in

parents and school systems when it comes to playing and playgrounds.

This substantial research alights the shortfall of playground requirements relating to Kindergarteners to Primary schools.

METHODOLOGY

Mixed method, Primary analysis, Personal Interview

This research aims to consider playgrounds as an essential part of the development of students, and analysis of its role in the overall growth of children of different age groups. The methods of random sampling, case study, observation with photographing, standardized interviews for grown-ups, and projective drawing methods for children were used. The children and adults that have taken part in the research attend a few of the schools in the Bhayander City of India. Children-schools and primary school age were asked the following questions "Which period do you like in school hours?", "Does your school have a playground?", "Do you like indoor or outdoor games to play during PD/PT period?" and "How many times does the teacher take you onto the ground?" "Does your school provide sports equipment for playing games?".

Are play and playground important in school? Play helps children by listening, paying attention, and sharing play experiences with others.

Playing with classmates generates new ideas and concepts through teamwork, that have value to the individual and others, and the development of these ideas and concepts from thought to reality is achieved through the use of playgrounds.

The set of abilities that students use to impart and exchange information, experiences, and ideas, explore the world around them and effectively interact and collaborate with others face to face come from the social interactions had on their grounds with other individuals of their age.

The set of abilities that students use to examine and make judgments about their thinking and that of others, and about information that they receive through observation, experience, and various forms of communication comes from trying to effectively work as a member of a team with a larger goal to work towards, which on children's level are team sports.



Skills, strategies, and dispositions that help students to stay healthy and active, set goals, monitor progress, regulate emotions, respect their rights and the rights of others, manage stress, and persevere in difficult situations are part of exchanges that happen on a playground. Personal awareness and responsibility to demonstrate self-respect and express a sense of an individual's well-being come from exchanges with schoolmates of varying age groups.

Ability and disposition to consider the interdependence of people with each other and the natural environment; to contribute positively to one's family, community, society,

and environment; to resolve problems peacefully; to empathize with others and appreciate their perspectives, and to create and maintain healthy relationships is learned through cognitive and emotional experiences shared among friends in a relaxing and stimulating environment.

Children require extra attention to get the best possible health development opportunities. At every step of their physical and mental development, children have specific needs. These needs cannot be covered in only the social arena but also need to be looked after in the academic frame, as about 30 hours are spent by them on the school campus in a week.

Apart from formal learning and health benefits, it is in play that children learn some of life's most valuable lessons, like learning to lose but not to be a loser, and not letting success go to their heads or failure to their hearts. It also involves leadership and team-building skills, all of which cannot be taught in a classroom.

Despite the benefits derived from play many factors have reduced play, including the absence of playgrounds, a hurried lifestyle, changes in family structure, and increased attention to academics and enrichment activities at the expense of recess or PD periods.

The lack of physical activities in a child's life results in many hours being spent in a room in their classes or school. This results in a lack of mental development through physical activities resulting in unfulfilled needs for play and social interactions which makes some children socially distant and causes depression in few. Another factor of fewer efforts to install a playground was the stigma of having children only focus on their studies and not play but expect them to be good in sports when it is required for scholarships or academic marks

without having them play during their school or home hours.

W.H.O. also estimates that about 7.5 percent of Indians suffer from some mental disorders. According to the numbers, 56 million Indians suffer from depression and another 38 million Indians suffer from anxiety disorders.

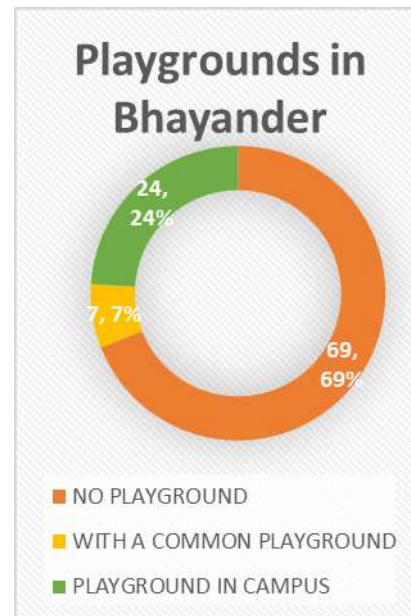
Growing up without any play facility can develop a lazy attitude, fear to open up socially as an adult, and have several health issues.

LEGAL PROVISIONS

The Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1992). The Article enshrines the right of a child to play, recreation, rest, leisure, and participation in cultural and artistic life. The 193 countries, including India that have ratified the UNCRC, are legally bound to uphold and promote this right through laws, policies, and action.

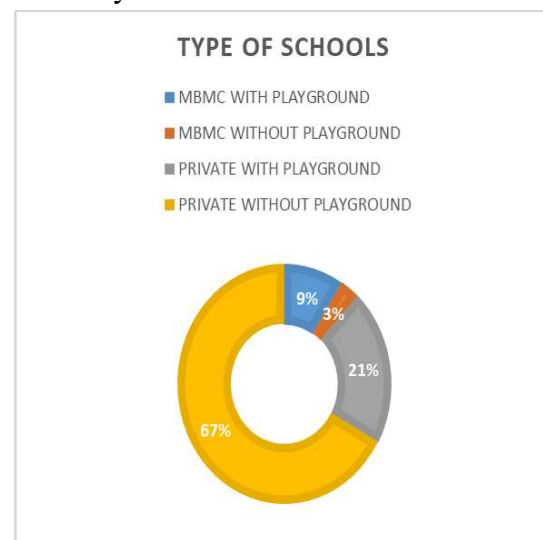
IS 8827 (1978): Recommendations for basic requirements of school buildings [CED 12: Functional Requirements in Buildings] state that outdoor space depends upon the size of the school and the location. Also for outdoor spaces under lawns, courtyards, etc., an area of 1meter square per student should be provided. Also, provision for playfields of different categories: pre-primary 1000 m2 and primary 4000 m2 should be made.

The Compendium of Architectural Norms & Guidelines for Educational Institutions 2019 guidelines state that the land on which the school is located should necessarily be a contiguous single plot of land. If there are more than two survey numbers etc., all the survey numbers/plots should be adjacent/ touching each other and shall make a single plot of land on the whole. A suitable building should be constructed on a part of the land and a proper playground should exist on the remaining part of the land.



DATA ANALYSIS

The chart indicates that out of 84 Primary and Preprimary schools available in Bhayander only 24% of them have a proper facility playground with sports equipment on their campuses, out of the 7% have a collaborative ground of up to 7 to 9 schools which is probably away from school. The Remaining 69% held their sports annual days in a public playground for a day or two.



It is observed that more government schools provide a better facility of playgrounds than private schools on their campuses.

Additional facilities for equipment are also lacking in 76% of schools. Some of the sports grounds are preoccupied with vehicle parking or any particular sport for secondary sections.



Pictures attached in the document clearly show that there is rarely any facility of playground provided for the pre-primary section and zero concern shown toward the lack of playground by society.

Interview analysis:

In this context, some parents have commented and shown concern for the importance of a child’s mental and physical health, but most have agreed with the situation and have normalized it by saying “Children have ample playtime after school so it is not necessary to play and have fun during school hours”, “We have enrolled our kids in extra activities like swimming and gymnastics to refresh their mind and school is a place to study only”.

On contrary, it is observed and mentioned by parents that, “Playtime during recess has boosted children’s attendance in class for the rest of the day. In connection with playing the diet has also improved in many kids. Eagerness to play does not spare any time to throw tantrums and the tiffin boxes are finished without any say”.

Mostly the survey has covered one-child families who do not get the chance to develop their social skills as they lack a sibling to play

at home with. Those parents mentioned that “playgrounds provide a golden chance to develop these skills and have helped the child to grow as a better functioning member of society an extrovert behavior is developed”, and “Play breaks are a boost for self-assessment too”.

“It is observed by scientists that when a kid uses both hands to do a particular activity his entire brain function while performing those activities, whereas activities in which only one hand is used only half hemisphere of the brain is active at that time, so play is indeed the activity that employs two hands constantly with enhances their brain usage as well” – Shama Kasalkar (interviewee).

“A “Play Way Method” for availing preprimary students explore nature through senses but all these activities are not performed on a ground or nature but on tresses or play room” – Preprimary teacher Sakshi

Also, gender biases are shown by the conservative mindset of parents saying “Why does she have to play on the ground, she can be in a room with her doll”. “Girls don’t play manly games like boys”.

The survey suggests that most children’s favorite period during school hours is the PD and games period, as they get time to play with friends and have fun, they have responded that they feel energetic after the recess and PT period which boosts them for rest of the day.

Many kids motioned that they never miss those days on which they have PT periods.

According to many, “academic teachers are using PT periods to complete their portions when exams are nearby, which edges the play time which has resulted in depression and anxiety during exams”.

CONCLUSION

The traditional mindset of education consisting only of theoretical learning of subjects such as Science and maths is still prominent in the Indian education system even in the 21st

century. Schools are failing miserably as an institution for the overall well-being of adolescents and teenagers focusing rather on academic performance, a focus shared by Indian parents and the government alike.

The playground can not only be considered a place of physical activity but also a place for having an emotional and mental reboot. Playgrounds along with having an impact on increasing the attendance of school-going children, also accelerate the emotional, motor, social and cognitive skills in individuals enabling them to sustain and perform better in this ever competing world.

This study also highlights the demands of children for playgrounds, increased recess time, and more frequent PT periods.

Providing and maintaining playgrounds is the responsibility of schools, as they act as an institution for the betterment and well-being of children promising an environment of overall growth.

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